

Bill Skoland: Okay this is oral history number 426 the following oral history interview was conducted by Commander Bill Skoland [ph?] for the Naval Historical Center Washington D.C. and for the National Park Service USS Arizonian Memorial at the Ala Moana Hotel, Honolulu Hawaii on December 6, 2001, at 9:05 PM. The person being interviewed is Michael Mickey Ganitch, who was a Seaman First Class on the USS Pennsylvania on December 7, 1941. Uh.. did I get that right Mickey?

Michael Mickey Ganitch: Correct.

Bill Skoland: Okay for the record please state your full name, place of birth and date of birth.

Michael: Michael Mickey Ganitch uh.. born November 18 1919, Mogador, Ohio.

Bill Skoland: And what did you consider to be your home town in 1941?

Michael: Uh.. San Leandro. I lived in San Leandro, California before I joined the Navy.

Bill Skoland: Okay.

Michael: And that was my home for several years after that.

Bill Skoland: What were the names of your parents?

Michael: My dad's name was Charles Ganitch no middle name. My mothers' name is Sophia, S-o-p-h-i-a, Kuzmik K-u-z-m-i-k. They're both from Yugoslavia.

Bill Skoland: How many brothers and sisters did you have or do you have?

Michael: Well I-- there was 14 of us originally. There was uh.. uh.. nine girls and five boys. I was number 12 and uh.. so there's are four of us still living I

uh.. have a three-- three sisters and myself are all living out of 14. My mother had 14 kids in 18 years.

Bill Skoland: Wow.

Michael: So she didn't-- in a period of 18 years or 19 years, she was either pregnant or nursing.

Bill Skoland: And how many- how many children and grandchildren do you have now?

Michael: I have uh.. 14 grandchildren and 16 great grandchildren.

Bill Skoland: And where did you go to high school?

Michael: I went to school in Mogdurio, Ohio. I graduated there in just a small town of 2,100 outside of the town of Akron, Ohio. And I graduated in high school in 1937.

Bill Skoland: And where and why did you enlist?

Michael: Oh, work was so bad, in fact I worked with the WPA which is a Works Progress Administration in Ohio building roads and bridges because there was no work. In fact, President Roosevelt encouraged projects like that for employment for the people. But work was still so bad and I had a sister living in Californian and she said come out to California and we'll see what we can do to get you a job out there. So I listen to what Horace Greely said, "Go West young man." So I came to California in 1939 and stayed there and worked in California until I joined the navy in January 1941.

Bill Skoland: Any good recruiting stories for us?

Michael: I was-- oh yes. <laughs> Yes, anybody that uh.. needs a little encouragement there as far as discipline because it helped me, because before I joined the Navy I was awfully hard to get along with. And so I went and joined the Navy to become a man and that's what I think resulted out of me being in the Service.

Bill Skoland: Where did you go uh.. after you were recruited?

Michael Mickey Ganitch: Well I went to San Diego for boot camp and I went to Quarter Masters and Signal school in San Diego training center and from there I went to the USS Pennsylvania battle ship BB 38, which is stationed at Pearl Harbor.

Bill Skoland: When did you arrive on the Pennsylvania?

Michael Mickey Ganitch: August 15, 1941.

Bill Skoland: What division where you assigned to?

Michael Mickey Ganitch: I was a Quarter Master because I went to Quarter Master and Signal school so immediately I went to Quarter Master and Sig-- Quarter Master division itself to use some of the knowledge that I gained while I was going to school in San Diego.

Bill Skoland: Okay. Uhm.. why did you-- did you get an opportunity to pick the Pennsylvania or at least type of ship?

Michael Mickey Ganitch: Well I-- they interviewed us to find our-- what our preference where.

Bill Skoland: Uh-huh.

Michael Mickey Ganitch: And uh.. one of the things I was very bad on was mechanical aptitude. And uh..uh.. so they said there, "What would you like to be?" And I says, "Well I'd like to be in something there that doesn't need mechanical aptitude." They said, "How about steering the ship?" And I said, "That would be great for me." Because up to that time the biggest ship I had ever seen was a ferry boat in Lake Erie. And so being on a big ship would be great for me. And uh.. then they says, "Well what t- type of ship?" I says, "Well, I was athletic minded and so I'd like to be on a ship where maybe have a football team 'cause I played football high school and semi pro football. And they said, "Well battleships have a lot of sports teams there." So I said,

"I'd like to have a battleship." And so that's how I uh.. it's chosen for the USS Pennsylvania.

Bill Skoland: Did you join the uh.. Pennsylvania football team?

Michael Mickey Ganitch: I joined the football team and uh.. uh.. so we-- in fact we had a terrific team that year. In fact, we lost one game out of about three months-- three months playing and uh.. in fact, we were going to play the USS Arizona for the fleet championship on December 7, of 1941. We were gonna leave the ship at five minutes of eight to do a little scrimmaging and the attack came at five minutes of eight and we had our football uniform on because we weren't going to uh.. have a place to change clothes there so I had my football uniform on when the attack came. So up in the crow's nest I went up to my battle station I was the look out. So it was a pretty tight squeeze especially with a little trap door like this to get- get through and pull myself through with all my shoulder pads there. So I was well protected during the attack.

Bill Skoland: So you were dressed for football.

Michael Mickey Ganitch: I was dressed for football but that game never got played there.

Bill Skoland: What position did you play by the way?

Michael Mickey Ganitch: I was running guard. I was running guard.

Bill Skoland: Running guard.

Michael Mickey Ganitch: Yes. I was really heavy there at that time I weighed 170 pounds there and uh.. nowadays there if you don't weigh 250 pounds you're- you're nothing for a lineman.

Bill Skoland: That's true.

Michael Mickey Ganitch: But I was pretty fast.

Bill Skoland: A question we've kind of been asking some other survivors is what do you-- do you recall what you were doing on December 6th?

Michael Mickey Ganitch: Yes. Uh.. we had uh.. uh.. the big ships uh.. always had a big band. And so we had the battle of bands at Block Recreation Center there at Pearl Harbor. And uh.. we won it there we barely nosed out the USS Arizona for the band. In affect they said politics were pulled because we had uh.. Admiral on our ship because we were the flag ship of the fleet, the USS Pennsylvania there and uh.. so they were going to try to get revenge for us-- from us uh.. the next day 'cause we were going to play them for fleet football championship at one o'clock on December 7th on Sunday.

Bill Skoland: About what time did you get back to the ship?

Michael Mickey Ganitch: Well it's about oh it must have been about 10:30, 11 o'clock that night. So we had a short night's sleep there and uh.. and then get ready to go play football the next morning.

Bill Skoland: Where was the ship located at the time of the attack?

Michael Mickey Ganitch: Well normally we're tied up at 1010 dock because uh.. I think the Admiral like to step off the dock and go on uh.. go ashore he didn't like to ride the boat there. So we always tied up at 1010 dock but we had propeller trouble. So either the day before or two days before we went into dry dock to work on our propellers and so there's no water under it we were sitting on blocks in- in the dry dock itself. So as a result there when the Japanese attacked there they didn't know where we were because they didn't get the word that we'd moved into dry dock because they knew just where the ships where and they didn't know that the Pennsylvania was uh.. in the dry docks so we didn't get hit until the second attack.

Bill Skoland: Okay. Uhm.. you said you were getting ready to go off and do battle with the Arizona on the grid irons.

Michael Mickey Ganitch: Yes.

Bill Skoland: Uhm.. how m-- where were you when the attacks started?

Michael Mickey Ganitch: Well the steering aft was the living compartment of the Quarter Masters, that's down there close to the rudder in the uh.. extreme bottom of the ship in the stern of the ship. And uh.. uh.. so we was getting ready to go and we were going to up on the dock uh.. go up on the deck uh.. to leave the ship at 8 o'clock. And so we're getting ready and the telephone rang and I answered the phone and he said uh.. uh.. "Japanese are attacking Pearl Harbor." I said, "Aw come on. Quit- quit your kidding." Of course we'd been talking about uh.. maybe getting in a war with Japan there on-- in fact when we were in boot camp they said, don't worry about it we'll wipe them out in a few weeks anything took place there. So they said, "There- there's an attack in Pearl Harbor." And- and I said, "No. No it can't be." About that time General Quarters went a we heard a shuddering there and uh.. the people were close on d- uh.. close to the guns got to their-- uh.. got to their stations there and started firing before anybody below decks even knew what was going on. It's about the same time that uh.. the ship started shuddering from-- 'cause sitting on blocks there any kind of 5 inch gun that's fired, anti-aircraft guns, that shook the ship. And so we knew that there was something- something going on. So off we go into the battle stations up to the crow's nest I went. And to get to the crow's nest you had to go on an outside uh.. tripod and it had rungs on it you'd go up it there and uh.. so that's just up- up in the open. You go up the starboard and down to port there so you don't uh.. get in a traffic jam. So up I went there and I found out later there that uh.. a machine gun nicks where around the rungs of the ladder that I had gone up. Whether it happened before I went up there, during the time I went up there, after I got up there I don't know. But they didn't get me. I think God had other plans for me.

Bill Skoland: Okay and you said about having to squeeze into the crow's nest up there.

Michael Mickey Ganitch: Yes it's a little trap door. It must have been about this big and you think about me with shoulder pads trying to pull myself through. But I got up there-- when an emergency like that there, you don't waste any time. You m- you make- make do. You may- maybe make yourself a little smaller to get through because you had to get up there and get up there in a hurry.

Bill Skoland: What were your duties up there in the crow's nest?

Michael Mickey Ganitch: I was the look out and I spotted this one plane coming in over uh.. on the f- f f-- well over the boats tied up at the boat landing. I saw the plane coming over and it'd-- I could see the planes coming over, over the top of the buildings. The guns down below could not see it so I kept reporting a plane coming, a plane coming in there. And they came in over the tops of the buildings the guns were already pointing in that direction and they shot it down. So that made me feel pretty good that I accomplished something out of it. But it's like a bad dream. A bad dream is what it was <inaudible>.

Bill Skoland: What made it a bad dream up there? What were you seeing that was making it that way?

Michael Mickey Ganitch: I was looking at these uh.. ships burning here and uh.. planes flying around, debris around and everybody running all- all over the place because everybody was scared. Because anybody said they weren't scared they're an awful liar, because uh.. something like this happened there's-- I didn't maybe I wasn't scared, but then I look about the machine guns and nicks that was there and the hole along side of me practically where a bomb hit till we got to uh.. uh.. that's a little scary coming that close.

Bill Skoland: Now uh.. Pennsylvania started off in a dry, dry dock.

Michael Mickey Ganitch: Yes. But uh.. then uh.. uh.. this destroyer g-- well, the second attack is when they found us. Evidently the first attack planes reported a big ship in the dry dock. So when they g-- we got hit there there was a bomb straddled us and alongside the dock one hit us and one hit the destroyer and the dry dock ahead of us because we-- <inaudible> destroyers were in the same dry dock. So the order was uh.. made there, flood the dry dock there, put out the fire. Uh.. except the theory didn't work there 'cause the fire caught the uh.. oil that came from the destroyer came on top of the water and started burning so it got pretty hot all around us.

Bill Skoland: Was it hot up there?

Michael Mickey Ganitch: Of course me in my football uniform there, it got pretty hot, or hotter yet. So uh.. the theory didn't work there, flood the dry dock.

Bill Skoland: So uh.. did you-- do you recall any-- kind of break it up, first attack wave do you recall any particular event from the first wave that sticks in your mind?

Michael Mickey Ganitch: Well, we look uh.. look around and uh.. and see all this stuff going on and can't believe it's happening and uh.. oh, I don't know, it's just there was so much going on at that time you don't even think about it. And there was a little bit a gap in between the first attack and the second attack so we had time to change clothes. So I went below decks there and put on my regular clothes there. So the time the second attack came, which was about maybe 15, 20 minutes later, I had regular uniform on there uh.. instead of my football pads. It was easier to get up to-- back up to the crow's nest when the attack-- second attack came.

Bill Skoland: Did you secure some general quarters between the first and second attack?

Michael Mickey Ganitch: Yes. Yes. But uh.. they kind of uh.. thought that uh.. uh.. it's over so it's n- kind of a modified securing from quarters there. The people-- they still kept people on the guns because they knew that uh.. uh.. it could be more coming on and so they were-- everybody was on edge and everybody was prepared in case something happened, which it did, the second attack.

Bill Skoland: When you came out of the crow's nest at the end of the first attack what did you see around you?

Michael Mickey Ganitch: Well uh.. uh.. it wasn't until the second attack where the- the one bomb hit us. But uh.. uh.. everybody running around and uh.. it- it just like uh.. every- everything was in- in turmoil itself. Uh.. just can't believe it's happening, really, just like a bad dream.

Bill Skoland: Okay so you the second general quarters in your back up in the crow's nest.

Michael Mickey Ganitch: Back up in the crow's nest you go and that's when uh.. that's when we got the 500 pound bomb it uh.. just missed me by about 45, 50 feet something like that. It came past me it's armor piercing bomb, a 500 pounder and it went through two decks and ex-- when it hit the

main deck, which is the strongest deck, it exploded it uh.. knocked out the gun crew and uh.. everybody that was in that area we lost 25 men that-- maybe 24 men that day. And uh.. uh.. but look alongside of me and here's a big whole where that bomb came down. That's-- if it exploded on contact I wouldn't be sitting here talking to you.

Bill Skoland: Hmm.

Michael Mickey Ganitch: So uh.. that- that gets a little scary when you think about that too.

Bill Skoland: Yeah. Pennsylvania is a sister ship of the Arizona correct?

Michael Mickey Ganitch: Yes.

Bill Skoland: Did you see the Arizona go up? Or hear it?

Michael Mickey Ganitch: Well I- t- I- I- heard the blast and uh.. looked over there and it was really smoking. There was so much smoke at that time you couldn't even tell which ship it was really because uh.. uh.. of course with the uh.. West Virginia tying up uh.. or tied up just uh.. forward of it and it got hit pretty bad and so with the smoke between the A- Arizona and the West Virginia and then the Oklahoma, which was forward of it. It was rolled over and uh.. at first, see, it's upright then and just a few minutes later it's laying over on its side there, 'cause everybody happened so fast. And then the Nevada trying to get under way and got out of the harbor and I figured well, "Oh no, if they sink it in the middle of the harbor what- what- uh.. what's going to happen to us?" And fortunately there that they grounded it, beached it there uh.. close to the entrance to the harbor and so that didn't block any of the ships from going out.

Bill Skoland: They actually beached it fairly close to you didn't they?

Michael Mickey Ganitch: Yeah it went pa- past us because uh.. uh.. we were uh.. pr- pretty much in the uh.. close to the entrance of the- the harbor itself. So we could see the people going out and looking. Planes coming in they looked like they were close enough to throw rocks at 'em if we had any

rocks to throw at them. They weren't that close but they looked awfully close.

Bill Skoland: Did you see any shoot-- any uh.. I've- I've heard it reported that uh.. the N-- the Nevada, right? Yeah. The Nevada had got a lot of attention when it got under way.

Michael Mickey Ganitch: Oh yeah. Because uh.. uh.. evidently the Japanese got the word there that uh.. if they sink it and it'd bottle up the whole fleet and they concentrated on. They had p- torpedo planes coming in, dive bombers and everything trying to get it there and uh.. we figured, "Well what's going to happen now? Is it going to get out and uh.. hopefully there it's not going to block the channel." And fortunately it did not block the channel and really it would have been something there cor-- and we were fortunate we didn't have any air craft carriers in the harbor because at- at that time uh.. up to that time, the battle ships were the strength of the fleet, any capital ships that you have was strength of fleet. But fortunately we didn't have any aircraft carriers in there and from then on the aircraft carriers were the strength of the fleet.

Bill Skoland: Mm-hm. Okay and then eventually you got secured from general quarters a second time, I assume.

Michael Mickey Ganitch: Yes.

Bill Skoland: What did you see when you came down that time?

Michael Mickey Ganitch: Oh I looked at that mess that they had in fact I had to go right past the- the big hole where the damage was and uh.. see what we could do to help out the people they ready-- they had enough help there so they had the Hospital Corpsmen and all, which w- was in a different part of the ship so none of those people were injured. So we had enough people there to take care of the wounded and the dead.

Bill Skoland: What did you see, if you can relate it.

Michael Mickey Ganitch: Big mess metal torn metal and just wondering who could survive around that.

Michael Mickey Ganitch: So we just stayed clear of it and- and they s- they started working. Once they got the mess cleared up they started patching us up so that we could go back to sea and we went to- uh.. out of the harbor but, oh, must have been about a week and half later we were patched up because that bomb hit-- we had-- did not hurt the water tight integrity of the ship. So all we had to do was just patch the- the deck itself and uh.. what was underneath it there and uh.. and we were ready to go to sea so we came back to uh.. California, San Francisco, and got-- started getting patched up get ready to fight the war.

Bill Skoland: Okay. Did you go forward and see the uh.. destroyers in the dry dock?

Michael Mickey Ganitch: Oh yeah. Oh yeah.

Bill Skoland: What did that look like?

Michael Mickey Ganitch: Oh it was a big mess because this one destroyer was laying over on the- on the other one there and what made it- what made it bad there you had to uh.. when you're in dry dock you can't use the heads, the rest rooms there. So you had to go out on the dock to the restrooms, which is right alongside the destroyers and see these people there are trying to uh.. save their ships and it- it was- it was really bad. And one- one thing that was a little comical 'cause I had the duty of quarter master that- that night. And uh.. uh.. after- after dark these uh.. Enterprise planes start coming in there and uh.. nobody knew anything about what's coming in and they start-- everybody started shooting at them. And we knocked down some of our own planes there and...

Bill Skoland: Yeah.

Michael Mickey Ganitch: ...because anything that moved they shot at.

Bill Skoland: Did you know it was the Enterprise planes coming in at the time?

Michael Mickey Ganitch: No, no, nobody knew anything here. Finally I heard them say over the radio it says, "Stop firing it's our own planes." And we had w- uh.. since I was a- a Quarter Master the watch, uh.. there-- we had one officer, officer of the deck there, he was uh.. he was from Texas there. And he's practicing his draw and then uh.. we- we figured we'd better stay clear of him no telling what the-- who- who he's going to shot at there and they-- they'd fired a-- the guards had fired some uh.. rifles on the dock there because they had sentry's on the dock there at that time at-- 'cause after the attack. And uh.. soon as there'd be some firing on he'd pull his gun wave his gun around there and everybody started to get in be- try to get in behind him in case he starts firing his gun. So it kind of scared us there. It got a little comical after awhile, but at that time it was little- little bit scary.

Bill Skoland: Uh.. did-- were you keeping the log at that time?

Michael Mickey Ganitch: Oh yes. Oh yes.

Bill Skoland: Did you log the uh.. the shooting of the planes down or no?

Michael Mickey Ganitch: No because at that team we didn't really know what we did. <laughs>

Bill Skoland: Did you log anything of interest that day?

Michael Mickey Ganitch: Well, just the attack that was on. I wasn't-- <inaudible> we had two- two Quarter Masters watch. I was the seaman now they had a Third Class that he's the one who wrote the log there, I just-- I was more of a messenger Quarter Master there, so I didn't get to write any of that, but I knew what was going into the log there. And uh.. uh.. so I know a lot of that stuff went on and uh.. what happened, the times and all a that uh.. because-- but there wasn't much to- to write about expect that we got uh.. damaged and the war was on.

Bill Skoland: Hmm. Uh.. what was the atmosphere like on the ship after- after the second wave cleared up?

Michael Mickey Ganitch: Well what's going to happen now? And- and here- here's the thing they- they thought, "Well the Japanese were going to

uh.. uh.. invade Oahu." So that night they got the word there they said for some reason the rumor came out there that the Japanese were uh.. invading the land. So everybody that wasn't on watch went down below decks there and got rifles and ammunition and uh.. and uh.. uh.. the canteens and g- get ready there to go ashore and do battle against the Japanese.

Bill Skoland: Huh.

Michael Mickey Ganitch: Because everybody is scared-- everybody is scared and they didn't know what was going on. If they were to attack the uh.. land they'd had took it because we weren't prepared at all. Because during, uh.. even during boot camp there, we didn't even try uh.. use uh.. regular rifles there. They'd-- sometimes they used uh.. broomsticks and stuff for- for-- because you didn't have uh.. the equipment that you needed to do uh.. actual training uh.. for the weapons.

Bill Skoland: Who was going to lead your landing for us if you got called out?

Michael Mickey Ganitch: <laughs> I don't know that. I was a Seaman on the 1,500 people on the ship there. So I'd be following orders whatever they say to do that's what we do. <laughs>

Bill Skoland: Interesting. What's uh.. what's your most vivid memory of December 7th?

Michael: Well, so- so much of it is all- all a- uhm.. all the- the dream, the dream it-- as a nightmare not- not in a really dream it's a-- it was a nightmare that something like that could happen there, you see it in movies. You'd seen mo- war movies and all that there, but it actually happened to you. It- it's just unbelievable that something like that could happen that we were not prepared. But we were very fortunate there they says, "Well they caught us un- uh.. off guard there in Pearl Harbor." If they were to caught the fleet outside, they were so much faster than we are. If they had cost uh.. uh.. caught us outside there, they would have wiped us out there and we'd a lost thousands and thousands more people than we did lose that- that day. We lost about 2,300, 2,400 people that day. We'd had lost uh.. uhm.. uh.. I- I wouldn't even be able to estimate how many people we'd a have lost because their ships are so much faster, so much better equipped, trained and

every-- we did some-- a lot of uh.. gunnery practice there the few weeks there before uh.. the war started, but nothing like the Japanese did. And they were better trained and they had the- all the ammunition. A lot of our ammunition lockers were locked up we couldn't even get to them that day. That's when-- made a bad-- the people wanted to shoot the guns and they couldn't even get to the ammunition. So they had to break open-- knock off the locks there so they could get the ammunition lockers. But we were fortunate there that uh.. the ships that were sunk, like we were sitting in dry dock, so they- they couldn't really sink us. Now the California just settled to the bottom same way the West Virginia, Oklahoma laid over on its side, which the righted later on tried to get it back to the states, which it sunk. But you know, that water uh.. wasn't real deep. So as a result there the extensive damage that uh.. could have happened if we're out at sea did not happen. So we were fortunate in that- that part.

Bill Skoland: You said you did some gunnery training before December 7th.

Michael Mickey Ganitch: Yeah.

Bill Skoland: Do you know what kind was it on a aircraft service or just general gunnery?

Michael Mickey Ganitch: No it's uh.. uh.. we had tar- targets. We had towing targets there that uh.. uh.. tugboats pulling targets we'd be shooting at the uh.. the sleeves and- and drones that were out. We'd uh.. we'd practice with them. And uh.. but nothing uh.. up to the big uh.. actual thing.

Bill Skoland: And was the uh.. practice anything like the real thing?

Michael Mickey Ganitch: Oh yes, it was because-- well we actually our ship was so slow that uh.. uh.. we- we got in a lot of invasions. But uh.. our ship would do-- our cruising speed about 15 knots is what we could do.

Bill Skoland: Oh, I'm sorry I didn't quite make that clear.

Michael Mickey Ganitch: Oh.

Bill Skoland: Was the-- when you were doing the gunnery training, uh.. which is probably a more controlled evolution and then the actual attack that came in, was the training anything like the attack itself? I mean were the gunners responding to something that they'd seen before in terms of speed and altitude <inaudible>?

Michael Mickey Ganitch: Oh yes. Oh yes definitely that because uh.. once the war started there we were so well trained on operating the guns, see we had a terrific uh.. record, uh.. gunnery record there for the invasions there.

Bill Skoland: Mm-hm.

Michael Mickey Ganitch: Because a lot of the invasions that they had there, the other ships could not knock out the gun in placements, well our ship did. They called on us because we were trained so hard so- so good that we had a terrific uh.. gunnery record.

Bill Skoland: Okay. Uh.. was there any scuttle butt before December 7th about an attack?

Michael Mickey Ganitch: Oh yes.

Bill Skoland: <Inaudible>

Michael Mickey Ganitch: In fact I wanted to-- when I went into boot camp in January 1941 I asked the instructor himself I says, "We going to get into war with Japan?" Doing a lot a talking. "Oh no don't- don't worry about that." So there's all kinds of talk going on. But uh.. I don't think anybody really took it serious.

Bill Skoland: Mm-hm.

Michael Mickey Ganitch: But it did happen.

Bill Skoland: I'm sure. Uhm...

Michael Mickey Ganitch: So we got into in- invasion there. Our ship, like, our ship was so slow that where we got into invasion of uh.. Akto [ph?] and Kiska [ph?], Makan, Kudelin, Anu Wetaks [ph?], Saipan, Guam, Pelu [ph?], Philippines and we were one of the ships that crossed the T at Sergua Straight. And then the- and invasion of uh.. Okinawa we got into port that day uh.. August 12, 1945. And uh.. a flag ship, uh.. we was a flag ship and the flag came on there and all of our personnel came on 8:30 that night the Japanese plane came up and aimed it's torpedo at the closest big ship it saw. It was the battleship Pennsylvania. Torpedo hit the uh.. propellers everything went up living compartment of Quarter Masters. I had 26 Quarter Masters I lost 20 of them that night. The next morning the Japanese asked for peace.

Bill Skoland: Hmm.

Michael Mickey Ganitch: I guess God had other plans for us, for me at least.

Bill Skoland: The uh.. one of the other survivors indicated that the Pennsylvania might have been slated to do something that Missouri end up doing.

Michael Mickey Ganitch: Yeah. We were the flag ship there and there was a good chance that uh.. uh.. the Admiral would want to stay on his own ship for the- the peace treaty. Well, s- since we were-- uh.. in fact they towed us into shallow water there at Okinawa in case we sunk because we had 19 foot of free of uh.. free board and that was a wash.

Bill Skoland: Yeah.

Michael Mickey Ganitch: And from that one torpedo because it's in the after part of the ship where it flooded everything in a- in a hurry. And uh.. so they'd stabilized us and got as many bodies as they could out and towed us to Guam, put us in a float and dry dock in Guam patched us up so we could go back to states under our own power. We could go at uh.. the two port propellers, one of them was bent. The starboard propellers were shot because that's where the torpedo hit. So we got back to states under our own power.

Bill Skoland: Mickey I see that you've got a Senior Chief badge on there.

Michael Mickey Ganitch: Yes.

Bill Skoland: When did you earn that and how long were you in the Navy?

Michael Mickey Ganitch: I was in the Navy 23 years. I made Chief March 1, 1945.

Bill Skoland: And how about Senior Chief?

Michael Mickey Ganitch: Senior Chief I made it in 1961, '61 uh.. yeah. Just uh.. just before-- shortly before I got out. Got out of the Navy in 1963. It started as Senior Chief and Master Chief uh.. just shortly before I got out.

Bill Skoland: Mm-hm. What's your best memory of the Pennsylvania?

Michael Mickey Ganitch: Well it was like home. I went on it Seaman Second August 15, of 19- 1941 and came off a permanent appointment Chief, they used it for the atomic bomb test in McKinney there because we were already d- damaged and so they wanted to have some capital ships in the atomic bomb tested in McKinney so they used us out for it and uh.. atomic bomb test a McKinney they took us put us in the harbor, anchored us and we went off on another ships there about 10 miles away and they said to face away from where the blast is going to be. Close your eyes and put your hand over eyes and I still saw the flash.

Bill Skoland: Wow.

Michael Mickey Ganitch: And so the second attack-- uh.. second test there was put animals aboard and I was a farm boy so they put me in charge of the goats and the pigs and the mice that they had and uh.. so then I went aboard there and put the mice in the places there and then after the underwater blast I had to go back on there and show them where I had put all these animals. And I came out with more animals than I had because the mice had little ones. And so I had more animals and live ones than I uh.. started with.

Bill Skoland: Wow.

Michael Mickey Ganitch: And they said make sure you th- throw away your clothes and- and uh.. take a good shower. That's the protection I had against the radiation which they kept it in Quadulan for two years after that trying to wash it off and they never could. And so they ended up taking outside the harbor and pull the plug it still wouldn't sink and they ended up torpedoing it. And it sits outside the harbor in Quadulan.

Bill Skoland: Mickey I'd like to thank you for your...

<audio ends abruptly>

End of Tape 426 Michael Mickey Ganitch